

# FORMS OF ABUSE (1)

## PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Verbally undermine self-confidence by constantly degrading her

- physical appearance
- intelligence
- housekeeping skills
- profession
- parenting skills
- sexual needs or responses
- culture/nationality
- religion

Accuse of mental illness

Isolate by controlling:

- what she does
- who she sees
- where she goes
- what she spends

Threaten to:

- kidnap, get custody of children
- abandon/hurt/kill children or pets
- hurt/kill family or friends
- hurt/kill himself
- abandon family
- withdraw financial support
- institutionalize her
- destroy treasured belongings

Injure, mutilate, abandon, kill pets

## PHYSICAL ABUSE

### INITIAL

- threats of violence
- hit, throw, break objects
- squeeze, pinch
- shake, restrain
- shove her into walls, furniture

### MODERATE

- twist arms or legs
- bite, slap, punch, kick, stomp, trip, throw down stairs
- demands for sex

### SEVERE

- choke, smother, try to drown
- hit with objects, weapons
- break bones, knock out teeth
- stab, shoot
- burn with iron, scalding liquids, cigarettes
- rape:
  - sex with weapon or fear of harm
  - sex with abuser and/or other men
  - forced sex with objects or animals
  - genital mutilation
- dragging by auto
- injury/death to fetus
- death

## CHRONIC REACTIONS

Feelings of:

- chronic fear
- low self-esteem
- worthlessness
- self-blame, doubt
- incompetence, failure, self-hatred
- alienation
- vulnerability
- anxiety, depression
- involuntary fear, dislike of men

Alcohol/drug abuse

Overeating, anorexia, bulimia

Headaches

Stomach ailments, ulcers

High blood pressure

Heart palpitations

Allergic skin reactions

Learned helplessness

Depression:

- insomnia
- chronic fatigue
- irritability
- loss of appetite

PTSD:

- flashbacks
- emotional flooding
- constipated anger, rage
- exaggerated startle reactions
- social isolation, reclusiveness

(1) Martinez J, The psychological dynamics of abusive relations: A trainer's guide and resource manual for law enforcement trainers. 1993. (Excerpted from *Another Way to Save a Life: Identifying & Treating Victims of Domestic Violence*. Washington County Task Force on Domestic Violence, Vermont. 1998.)